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THE NEW ASOKAN EDICT OF MASKI.

Hyderabad Archaeological Series.

No. I.

THE NEW ASOKAN EDICT OF MASKI.



PUBLISHED
BY
HIS HIGHNESS THE NIZAM'S GOVERNMENT.

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1915

RESOLUTION.

Proceedings of the Government of H. H. the Nizam in the Judicial, Police and General (Archæological) Departments.

No. 5/1, Miscellaneous.

Dated Hyderabad, Deccan, 4th December, 1915.

SUBJECT.

Discovery of an inscription of Asoka at Maski in the Raichur District.

READ :—

1. Letter No. 1218, dated the 11th May, 1915, from the First Assistant Resident, Hyderabad, to the Political Secretary to H. H. the Nizam's Government.
2. Letter dated the 11th July, 1915, from W. R. C. Beadon, Esq., F.G.S., to the Superintendent of Archæology, Hyderabad.
3. Letter No. 192, dated the 15th July, 1915, from the Superintendent of Archæology, Hyderabad, to the Secretary to Government, Judicial, Police and General Departments.
4. Letter No. 2497, dated the 30th September, 1915, from the First Assistant Resident, Hyderabad, to the Political Secretary to H. H. the Nizam's Government.

REMARKS :—

On the 27th January, 1915, Mr. W. R. C. Beadon, F.G.S., Mining Engineer, while examining old gold workings in the village of Maski in the Raichur district, accidentally discovered three lines of an inscription engraved on a boulder about 9 × 5 feet lying at the mouth of a cavern. A few days later when Mr. Beadon met the First Taluqdar of Raichur, Maulavi Bashir-ud-din Ahmed, he mentioned the discovery to him, and together they exposed four more lines of the inscription. Maulavi Bashir-ud-din Ahmed reported the matter to the Superintendent of Archæology, Hyderabad, who visited the place on 4th July, 1915, exposed the eighth line of the inscription, and took photographs and estampages of it.

In the meantime Mr. Beadon had communicated with Rao Sahib H. Krishna Sastri at Ootacamund; and the Madras Government obtained permission from H. H.'s Government for Rao Sahib Krishna Sastri to visit the place, which he did about the middle of July, 1915, and to take photographs and estampages of the inscription.

H. H.'s Government, realising the value of the inscription as being an edict of Asoka, referred the discovery to Sir John Marshall, the Director-General of Archæology in India, with whose co-operation the inscription was placed in the hands of Rao Sahib H. Krishna Sastri to be edited. It appears from the Rao Sahib's translation that the edict is of no little importance in indicating the

South-Western limits of Asoka's empire, a point which has been the subject of much controversy, and also because for the first time the name of the Monarch appears expressly as "Asoka" in addition to the appellation of Dēvānam Piya, 'the beloved of the gods,' or Piyadasi, 'the well-wisher (of all),' occurring in all the other inscriptions hitherto known.

ORDER :—

H. H.'s Government are pleased to order that the annexed translation of the edict made by Rao Sahib H. Krishna Sastri, officiating Government Epigraphist to the Government of India, shall be published for general information. The plates accompanying the translation have been made from photographs taken by the Superintendent of Archæology, Hyderabad. The estampage is a copy of the one taken by Rao Sahib Krishna Sastri.

H. H.'s Government will be glad to receive and, if it is considered desirable, to publish for general information any further developments that scholarship may bring to light in connection with this inscription.

H. H.'s Government desire to express their cordial thanks to the Madras Government for allowing them the help of Rao Sahib H. Krishna Sastri to decipher so important an inscription, and their appreciation of the scholarly contribution which the Rao Sahib has made in connection with it.

(By Order).

A. HYDARI,

*Secretary to Government,
Judicial, Police, and General
Departments.*

Copy forwarded to:—

1. The Chief Secretary to Government and Peshi Secretary to His Highness the Nizam.
2. The Sadr-ul-Maham of Paigahs.
3. The Secretary to Government, Political Department.
4. The Secretary to Government, Financial Department.
5. The Director General of Revenue.
6. The Secretary to Government, Public Works Department.
7. The Director General of District Police and Jails.
8. The Commissioner of Police, City and Suburbs.
9. The Superintendent, Government Press, for publication in the *Jarida*.

THE MASKI ROCK EDICT OF AŚŌKA.

The discovery of the three Aśōkan Edicts at Śiddāpura in the Mysore State, by Mr. Lewis Rice in the year 1892, created a sensation in the educated world, since their very existence proved beyond doubt the extension of Aśōka's dominions in the Dekkhan. In his edition of these edicts* Dr. Bühler expressed his opinion that Suvannagiri, 'the gold mount,' which was the head-quarters of Aśōka's Viceroy in the Dekkhan, was to be looked for in the direction of the Western Ghats. Now at Maski (called Piriya-Māsangi in the Chālukyan records of the place) has been discovered an Aśōkan inscription which takes us further westward from Śiddāpura in the Dekkhan plateau. The village Maski is situated in the Lingsugur Taluk of the Raichur District of H. H. the Nizam's Dominions, some seventy miles due south-west from Raichur *viā* Hutti, at Longitude 76° 45' and Latitude 15° 57'. If Bühler is right in thinking that Suvannagiri has to be looked for in the direction of the Western Ghats,† it is not unlikely that Maski, which is nearer to these than Śiddāpura, was included in the district of Suvannagiri. It might appear fanciful to connect Suvannagiri, 'the gold mount,' with the country around Maski which abounds in numerous ancient gold workings. Nevertheless, it has to be remembered that the country shows clear traces of its having been once, in very remote times, the most important gold-working centre; for, at Hutti which is not very far, the shaft of the old workings, as Mr. J. D. Hay, the Manager of the Hutti Gold Mines, kindly informs me, is the deepest in the world, known so far.

Mr. C. Beadon who has been prospecting for gold on behalf of Messrs. Taylor & Sons, in the neighbourhood of Maski, accidentally discovered some six months ago, on the 27th January 1915, traces of old writings on a natural boulder at the entrance into a spacious cavern on the south-western slope of the hill adjoining the village. The hill is a typical South-Indian granite outcrop some four-hundred to four-hundred and fifty feet high and a mile long, surrounded by wide stretches of cotton-soil land. As a shrewd observer of such curiosities and an ardent enquirer, Mr. Beadon followed the traces on the stone and with the help of Maulavi Bashir-Ud-din, First Taluqdar, Raichur, to whom the discovery was duly reported, exposed to view seven lines of an inscription, written in characters which were quite unintelligible to him. In consultation with Mr. L. Bishop of the Hutti Gold Mines, who is no less an exponent of Indian Antiquities than Mr. Beadon himself, a careful eye copy of the writing was made and sent to me for opinion. I at once recognised the importance of it and applied to

* *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. III, pp. 134 ff.

† Dr. W. Geiger identifies Suvannagiri with a mountain of that name near Girivraja in Magadha; see his *Ed. of Mahāvamsa*, Introd. p. xxvii f.

the Madras Government for permission to go to Maski and myself examine the inscription *in situ*. This being granted (*vide* G. O. No 946 Public, dated 16th June, 1915) I proceeded to Maski. G. Yazdani, Esq., M.A., Superintendent, Archæological Survey, Hyderabad, being apprised of the discovery on the report of the First Taluqdar, had already inspected the monument with the result that he discovered yet an eighth, and perhaps the last, line of the inscription. He had also thoroughly explored the site, taken the necessary estampages and photographs for His Highness the Nizam's Government and submitted a set of them to the Director General of Archæology, Simla. Thus before I could reach Maski all the preliminary work in connection with this important discovery had been practically completed. It remained for me now only to take the required photographs and estampages and to interpret the inscription. Two views of the cavern and of the inscribed rock within it, were taken under my direction by my Photographer Mr. P. Visvanatha Aiyar and five inked estampages prepared. The illustrative plates Nos. I-III annexed to this Report include two photographs by Mr. Yazdani and one inked estampage by me and have been prepared at the Surveyor General's Office, Calcutta. I must here submit that my work was greatly facilitated by the personal interest which Messrs. Bishop and Beadon had all along taken in unravelling the contents of this mysterious record and was enhanced by the willing assistance in every way rendered by the District, Taluq and Village Officers under the very kind orders of H.H. the Nizam's Government.

The cavern in which the inscribed boulder stands is formed of a huge rock resting at various points of its periphery on other smaller ones, some of which are partly buried in the gravelly soil below. The boulder which is a block of crystalline grey granite of irregular shape stands at the southern entrance into the cavern, with the writing facing inwards. The surface of the boulder has peeled off at various places, sometimes right up to the depth to which the letters were incised, and measures roughly 8 ft. 9 inches by 5 ft. At the righthand corner of the bottom a piece of the boulder lies separated by a big crack which must have existed already at the time when the inscription was engraved on it, since the writing is not continued on that piece as otherwise it would have been. The lines are crooked and the letters vary in size, the largest being $4\frac{3}{4}$ " in height and the smallest 2". The inscribed surface curves inwards as we get to the last lines of the inscription and hence, perhaps, the jaggedness and irregularity of the letters in this part of the record. The damaged condition of the boulder considered together with the large crack or cracks running transversely right across the overhanging rock makes it a matter of urgent necessity to conserve the monument from further possible damage, by propping up with strong masonry pillars the dangerous roof-rock. A further improvement for its easy inspection by scholars would be to dig up the ground 5 ft. wide in front of the inscribed boulder to a depth of 2 or 3 ft. below the last line of the inscription and pave the floor with slabs of granite, providing of course for the drainage of rain water which would otherwise accumulate at the bottom of the boulder and eventually undermine its foundation. The inscription and the ground in front may then be enclosed by an iron railing and a wicket.

The importance of the inscription lies pre-eminently in its mention of the name Aśōka as the author of the Edict, who was hitherto known only as Dēvānām Piya, 'the beloved of the gods', and Piyadasi, 'the well-wisher (of all).' That these epithets signified only Aśōka, the grandson of the Maurya king Chandragupta, who lived in the first half of the 3rd century before Christ, has been very ably proved by M. Senart, by elaborate reference to Buddhist literature. The present discovery establishes beyond doubt what has been so far only a legitimate and obvious surmise and renders further speculation unnecessary. In spite of the mutilated condition of the text, it is possible to get a clear idea of the contents of the Maski inscription by comparing it with those of the Rūpnāth and Sahasrām Edicts. The former is found practically to include the same statements and admonitions as the two latter, although it is much shorter and worded much more tersely. The close resemblance which our Edict bears to the Rūpnāth and Sahasrām Edicts, both in the matter of style and in contents, is a significant fact which cannot go unnoticed. The Śiddāpura Edicts, which are situated only 45 miles away to the South-East of Maski, are diffuse in style and reveal an additional passage about the reverence due to parents, preceptors, *etc.*, which is found in no other Edict of the king. § After a careful examination of the Rūpnāth and Sahasrām Edicts, M. Senart arrived at the conclusion that they must have been the earliest of the Aśōkan Edicts. Consequently the Maski Edict which bears such close resemblance to them cannot but belong to the same period of Aśōka's reign, *viz.*, the 13th year after his coronation. Unlike the Rūpnāth and Sahasrām Edicts, however, there is no mention of the *Vyūtha* in the Maski record; nor are there any visible traces of numerical figures to be seen on the stone in the big undeciphered gaps of the text. The following text, translation and notes have been prepared by me with the kind co-operation of Dr. V. Sukthankar, M.A., Ph.D., a Government of India Research Scholar, who is studying South-Indian Epigraphy in my office.

TEXT.†

[I.] [D]ev[ā*]na[r̥n]¹ Piyasa Asok[a]sa
² ḍh³ t⁴.

¹ The length of *vā* has not been marked, evidently through the carelessness of the engraver.

² The gap between *sa* and *ḍh* seems to have contained 8 or 9 syllables. The Rūpnāth Edict has *sāti[le]kāni* a before *ḍh*. The Dhauli Edict has *vachanena* after *Devānām Piyasa*.

³ The upper portion of *ḍh* is broken away. It is therefore not possible to

§ It may be noted that the style in which the Śiddāpura Edicts sum up the Essentials of Aśōka's *Dhama* very strongly remind one of the *Upanishads*, particularly that of the last section of *Śikshāvallī* in the *Taittiriya-Upanishad*.

† The text has been transcribed directly from the stone. Hence it is that sometimes letters which appear doubtful on the Plate may not be found enclosed in square brackets, as usual.

[2.] ⁵. [ni] vasāni ⁶[ya]m am sumi
⁷bum[pā]śake ⁸. . . . ⁹[t]ire-
 [ke]. .

[3.] .mi [Sa]mgha[m] ¹⁰[upa]gate [bā]
 . . ¹¹. mi ¹²u[pa]gate [i*] pure
¹³Jambu-

[4.] . . s[i] . . . [devā husu] ¹⁴
 te d[ā]ni misibhūtā [i*] iya aṭhe
 khuda-

[5.] ke[na] ¹⁵h[i] dhamayu[tena]
 sake ¹⁶adhigatave [i*] na hevaṃ
 dakhitaviye ~[uḍā]-

say whether the superscribed vowel, if any, was *i* as in Rūpnāth or *a* as Oldenberg and Senart wish to have (*Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XX, p. 156).

⁴ Only the left lower limb of the *akshara* is visible; the accompanying photograph by Mr. Yazdani shows, however, traces of a medial *i*.

⁵ This letter which must be *yā* is completely broken away.

⁶ The bottom of the *akshara* runs into a crack in the stone and makes the reading rather uncertain.

⁷ The syllable *bum* is clear. It is obviously a mistake of the writer or the engraver for *u*; the letter *pā* appears to have been corrected from some other.

⁸ As in l. 1. 1 we have a large gap which would have contained 7 or 8 syllables. Faint traces of the lower portions of two or three of these are visible on the stone.

⁹ Only the vowel sign of *ti* is visible.

¹⁰ Faint traces of the two syllables *upa* are visible. The stone here has peeled off right up to the depth to which the letters were cut.

¹¹ We have perhaps to restore *ḍham cha*. There are no visible traces on the stone.

¹² The preceding syllable may possibly be read as *su*.

¹³ With this looped form of *ja*, cf. Bühler's *Indian Palaeography*, Table II, Col. III. 15.

¹⁴ Traces of the four syllables enclosed in brackets are distinctly visible on the stone. The reading is confirmed by the recurrence of the same syllables in l. 2 of the Rūpnāth Edict.

¹⁵ The upper portion of this letter is broken away.

¹⁶ One would have expected *sakye*; but there is not enough room for a subscript *y* below the letter *ke*.

[6.] lake va ima adhigachh[e]yā ti
[I*] ¹⁷ khu[da]ke cha uḍā]lake cha
vata-

[7.] viyā hevaṃ ve [ka] laṃ taṃbha ¹⁸
da [ke ṭhe ti] ¹⁹ . . . t k ²⁰ cha
vaḍhi-

[8.] siti chā diyaḍhiya h[e]sati [I*].

¹⁷ Of the bracketed letters only the upper halves are discernible on the rock. The lower halves are more or less uncertain.

¹⁸ The word *taṃbha* reminds us of the readings *silāthambhā* and *silāṭhabhe* of the Sahasrām and the Rūpnāth Edicts.

¹⁹ The bracketed syllables are very uncertain.

²⁰ Perhaps we have to restore *chira-ṭhitike* as in the Śiddāpura Edict No. I

TRANSLATION.

(*This is the word, i.e. command*) of the Beloved of the gods, (*king*) Aśoka (*during*) the two years and a half ¹ that I am ² (*i.e. have been*) a lay disciple more than (*I*) approached ³ the community of the (*Buddhist*) monks (*Samgha*); and approached (*it*) with zeal. (*Those who*) were formerly ⁴ gods in Jambu[dvīpa]. these have now become false.⁵ This result is possible indeed to be achieved by the small man (*khudaka*) who applies himself to *Dhama*.⁶ (*One*) ought not to think thus: that only the great man (*uḍāḷaka*) could achieve this (*result*). Both the small man and the great man should thus be told (*This shall be*) of long duration and will prosper; (*and*) will become one and a half (*times as great*)! ⁷

REMARKS ON THE TRANSLATION.

¹ *Aḍhatiya*: This corresponds to the Sanskrit *ardhatritīya*, § 'half of the third (unit).' The meaning is: 'the two first units with half of the third,' i.e. two and a half. Cp. Hindi *aḍhāī*. ² This rendering is based on the supposition that the correct equivalent of *yam am* is the Sanskrit *yat aham*. It may, however, be remarked that the first personal singular pronoun in the Aśoka inscriptions is *hakam*. ³ *Upagate* occurs further on, in the same line and takes the place of *upayāte* of the Śiddāpura Edict. ⁴ *Pure* corresponds to the Sanskrit *purā*; see Childers s.v. ⁵ *Misibhūtā* (Skt. *mṛishībhūtāḥ*) is the *vṛitti* formed with the Pāṇinian suffix *chvi*† and hence shows that Aśoka for the first time proved the old gods of Jambudvīpa to be untrue. ⁶ *Dhamayutena*: This word must qualify the preceding word *khudakena* and must here be taken in the literal sense given to it by M. Senart. ⁷ *Diyaḍhiya* is apparently a compound of the word *diyaḍha* (Skt. *dvyardha*) and the affix *iya*. The latter, may possibly have been added on the analogy of *aḍhatiya*, where, however, it is organic and forms regularly a part of the word *tiya* (Skt. *tṛitiya*). With the word *diyaḍha* compare the Hindi *diḍh*.

H. KRISHNA SASTRI.

§ [The commentary Kāśikā, on Pāṇini I. 1. 23, refers to compounds in which the numeral following *ardha* is an ordinal—V.S.]

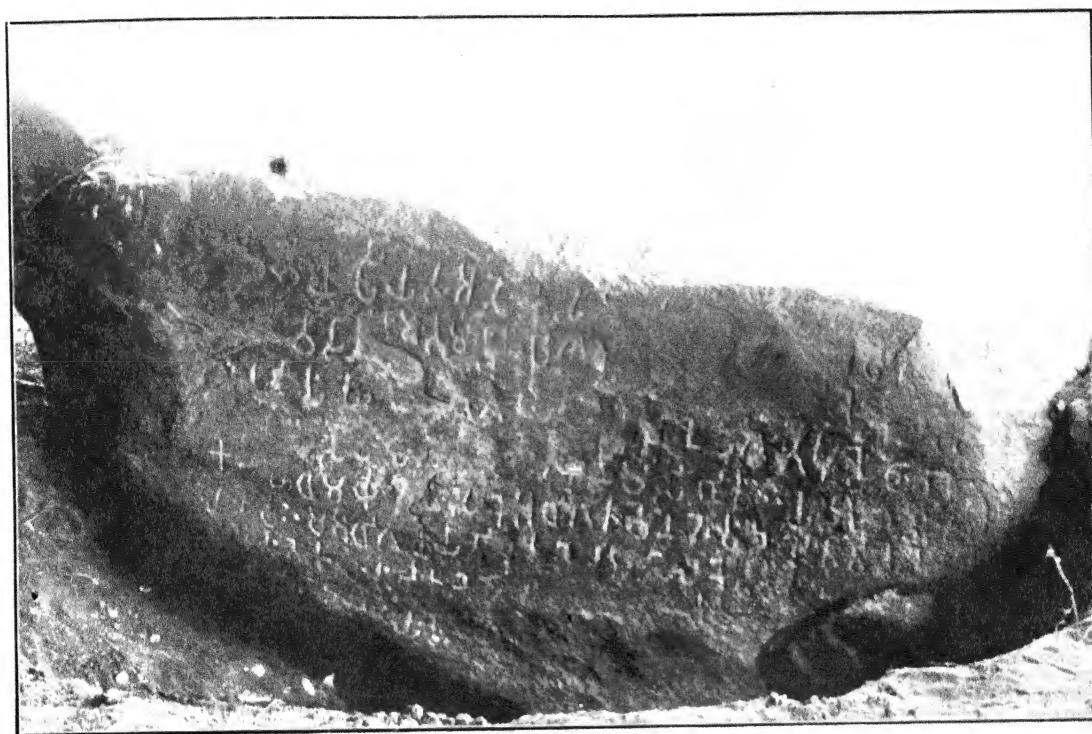
† See *Vārttika* to Pāṇini V. 4. 50. The form *mṛishībhūtāḥ* is grammatically incorrect; for, according to the commentary on VII. 4. 32, compounds of this type beginning with an indeclinable, as in the present case, do not change their final vowel into *i*.



Photo-Engraved & printed at the offices of the Survey of India, Calcutta, 1915.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE CAVERN.

The stone marked 3 bears the Edict on its back.

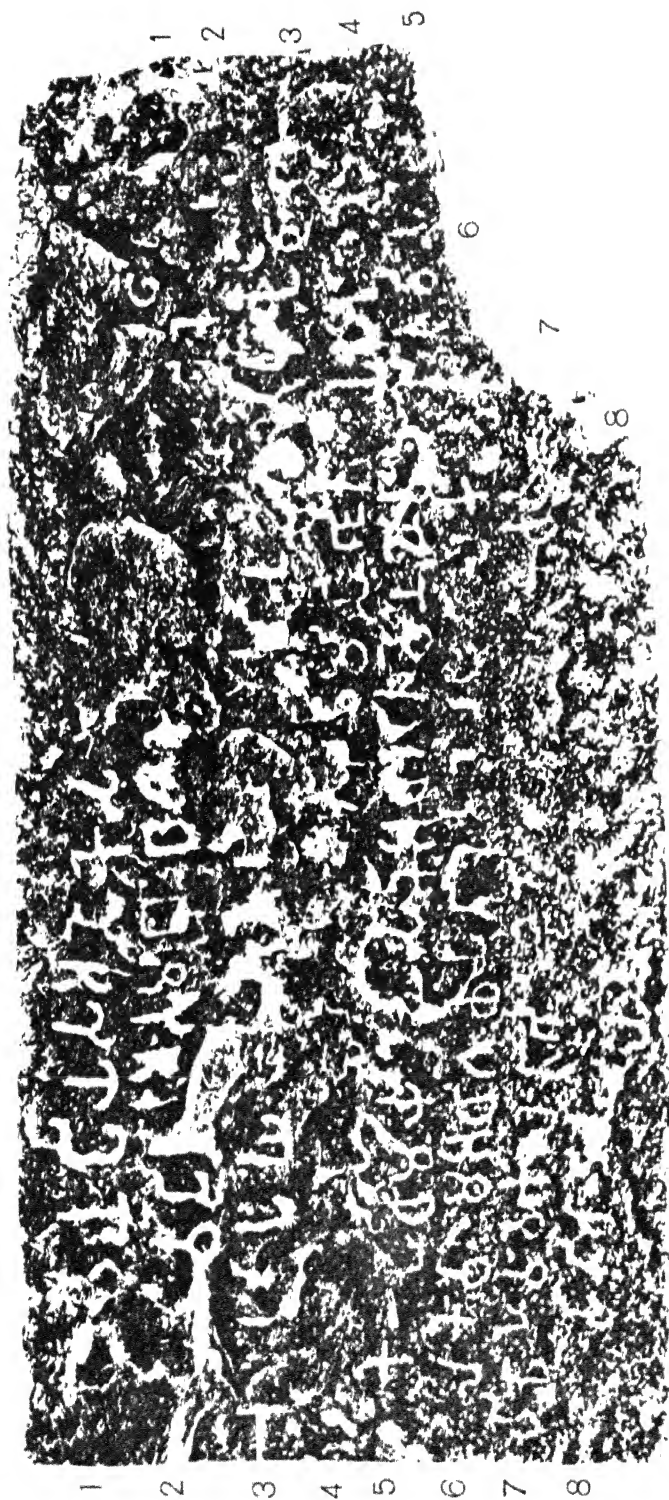


(A) MASKI EDICT. (PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM THE STONE)



U. Jordan.

(B). THE SAME. (ANOTHER VIEW.)



MASKI ROCK-EDICT OF A'SŌKA.

